



**270 Beauty Hill Road Barrington, NH 03826**  
**603-923-1168 www.WEecoCenter.com**

Barrington Planning Board  
333 Calef Highway  
PO Box 660  
Barrington, NH 03825

May 19, 2020

**Re: Wildlife Encounters**  
**270 Beauty Hill Road**  
**Tax Map 249 Lot 32**  
**Tax Map 250 Lot 133**  
**FES #1808**

Dear Planning Board Members:

I am writing today to summarize and explain the justification for this request to clarify & modify issuance of an existing approved Conditional Use Permit, and terms related to our Site Plan that has received your Conditional Approval

Many thanks the Board for its attention to and work on our proposal over the last 6 months, and the granting of our Conditional Approval! We acknowledge that we are a unique business, that we are not seasoned developers with a mature understanding of the process and procedure of approvals, and that we are living in and through unique times and circumstances! Thank you for your patience and service.

Our Situation:

For 16 years, Wildlife Encounters has operated outreach educational programs - generating 100% of its gross revenue from delivering over 1000 presentations per year in schools, businesses & communities across New England. Since July of 2017 a significant amount of that gross revenue has been redirected from Rochester operations into the Town of Barrington to acquire and pay the taxes on the property, save the house from collapse by immediately replacing the severely compromised roof, endless hours cleaning up and improving the property and more.

- March 15th -government shutdown schools and we go to zero-revenue. No Outreach programs allowed due to Stay at Home order.
- March 30th - final paychecks, staff now volunteering their time to care for animals
- We survived April on revenue owed as accounts receivable from customers, and the incredible generosity of the public donating over \$3500 to an emergency GoFundMe we launched after being inspired to do so by Mike Guyre at the GBCC.
- For the last 6 weeks we have been teaching "virtual classes" from the farmhouse, since the large structure gives us abundant space and internet connectivity to do so.
- Seeing some success, our May 2020 revenue is only down 90% from 2019.

We almost cancelled our appearance at your first "Virtual Planning Board Meeting" in April, but the response to the GoFundMe gave our team and myself hope that if we could get the site plan approval, we might be able to start to do activities on Beauty Hill that could generate a little revenue and help the company survive the pandemic! Following the Governor's request to keep outdoor activities local, we were hoping to offer safe,

guided nature walks, possibly host small family birthdays under a tent or maybe even offer a very limited summer camp experience this year, as had been discussed with Code Enforcement at the end of February following the approval of our CUP application.

We were surprised to learn that none of these activities would be allowed because we did not have a "Certificate of Occupancy for the Use" (which was something we had never heard of). Furthermore, the way the Conditional Approval is written, we cannot be issued the "C/O for the Use" until we find a way to fund and build the driveway, parking lot and detention pond - which we have no use for currently because we cannot have gatherings of more than 10 people, and may never need in the future if the business fails.

In fact, it was brought to light that even having a (former) employee park in the upper driveway, or to even conduct an education Zoom session from the farmhouse was technically a violation because it is commercial activity and we do not have a Certificate to use the property for the approved use.

Considering Wildlife Encounters' current cashflow situation and the general banking / lending environment makes it impossible to borrow \$100,000 for such work and given there is no need to create a new curb cut until things open up potentially in 2021 – we are asking the Planning Board to work with us on some accommodations in light of the pandemic. To work with us to flex and adapt. To allow us to make responsible use of the assets and abilities we have, so we may grow and develop modestly and responsibly over time as the pandemic passes and our business recovers.

Our proposed Pandemic Response & Project Development Plan

### **PHASE 1 – Respond & Adapt**

- (1) We are asking that the Planning Board grant accommodations and amend the Conditional Approval of the Site Plan as necessary to allow Code Enforcement to issue the “Certificate of Occupancy for the Use”. This will allow our operations to be compliant as staff / employees and contractors park in the existing upper parking area near the residence to deliver Zoom classes and other virtual programming from the office in the farmhouse. It will allow compliance in holding staff meetings as we pivot our business and offerings in response to COVID-19, permit contract employee parking to complete barn improvements and other property improvements, and resident parking.
- (2) We are requesting an amendment to expand the use of the available space in the existing and already lit upper parking area as follows: (see diagram from Stonewall Surveying)
  - Approve use of the upper parking area for up to 4 non-handicapped customer parking spots on a temporary basis, until and if the lower driveway, parking lot and detention pond are completed and approved for use.
  - Approve “marking & delineation” of the parking spots in the already lit, open space in order to ensure safe parking and the unobstructed ability for emergency vehicles to access the complete driveway to the barn in the future if necessary.
- (3) Amended approval to permit commencement of on-site activities with a maximum of 20 participants, so long as activities are conducted in compliance with State & health guidance in order to control risk regarding health & safety, are within the hours already established under the CUP, and do not include use of the barn under construction.
- (4) Receive NH DES wetlands crossing permits, create nature trails, back property education spaces and wetland crossings.

## **PHASE 2 – Complete Barn Reconstruction & Improvement – 2020**

Complete structure as necessary to receive Certificate of Occupancy to allow for animals to occupy the dirt-floor main level, and for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to function as service delivery space under IBC Section 304 as Business Group B: Occupancy as “training and skill development not in a school” and “professional services”. As cashflow or outside financing permits, improve the building for climate control and future year-round use, build the downstairs washroom / handicapped accessible facilities and install the leach field. In the meantime, handicapped and non-handicapped accessible portable toilets and hand washing stations will be provided.

## **Phase 3 – Driveway, Parking Lot & Rainwater Management – 2020/2021**

As we recover from the COVID 19 pandemic, restrictions are lifted and weather / resources permit – so long as there is business justification, we intend to proceed as quickly as possible with this phase, to potentially run concurrent with Phase 1 & 2 but certainly taking longer to reach completion. Anticipating a resurgence of illness and probably imposition of government restrictions that, along with winter and the holiday season will curtail our business and ability to conduct groundwork – it is prudent to set the expectation for completion of this phase in 2021.

## **Phase 4 – Upland In-Ground Education Building – Future (2022 or beyond)**

Should we be fortunate enough to recover receive the support from the community, establish ourselves and succeed through the progression of the first 3 Phases - and should there be business justification and resources to do so, we will return to the Town and Planning Board with details for this concept building.

In health,  
Derek Small - Director



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